



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY FINANCE COMMAND
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46249-3000

SSFM-FC-ZA

22 January 2009

MEMORANDUM THRU ~~Commander~~, U.S. Army Finance Command, 8899 East 56th Street,
Indianapolis, IN 46249-3000

FOR Commander, 181ST Infantry Brigade, Fort McCoy, WI 54656

SUBJECT: 251st Financial Management Detachment (FMD) Certification Exercise (CERTEX)
Report

1. Background: USAFINCOM Operational Support Team (OST) conducted a CERTEX for 251st Financial Management Detachment from 13-16 JAN 09.
2. Purpose: To provide an assessment of the unit's technical abilities in conjunction with the Financial Management Combined Arms Training Strategies. Units are rated in their overall performance of a task. Ratings are: T – Trained, P – Needs Practice, or U – Untrained

TASK	RATING
Perform Disbursing Operations (14-2-8002)	P
Conduct Commercial Vendor Operations (14-2-8003)	P
Determine Entitlements to Pay and Allowances (805A-FSC-8103)	P
Process Commercial Accounts Transactions (14-2-8004)	P
Overall Assessment	P

3. Tasks Evaluated.

a. Perform Disbursing Operations (14-2-8002): P

(1) Subtasks.

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| (a) Obtain Funds for Disbursing Purposes (805A-44A-6112) | T |
| (b) Enter Cashier Transactions (805A-444C-1454) | P |
| (c) Process a Loss of Funds (805A-44C-4103) | T |

- (d) Prepare the Daily Statement Accountability (805A-DOP-8105) P
- (e) Review Internal Control Procedures for Adequacy (805A-44A-7108) P
- (f) Safeguard Public Funds (805A-44A—7116) P
- (g) Perform Financial Management Detachment Operations (805A-44C-4902) P

(2) Observations. The 251st FMD disbursing cell performed to standard during the 4 day certification exercise (CERTEX) held at Fort McCoy, WI from 13-16 January 2009. While serving as DDO during the exercise, 1LT McLaughlin displayed a sound understanding of disbursing operations by demonstrating the ability to complete the statement of accountability (SF 1219) correctly and serve in the capacity of DDO. From the first to the final day of the exercise, he continually progressed and should continue to improve his knowledge base and scope of disbursing operations with time and proper guidance. In the same manner, SSG McMichael while serving as DA, demonstrated a superb understanding of disbursing operations, and is fully capable to lead her section to success. Having served as a DA in a prior deployment, she arrived at Fort McCoy with a sound knowledge of disbursing operations and benefited greatly from the training and CERTEX.

(a) Cashier operations during the CERTEX greatly improved from day to day. Operations went from being slow and hesitant on the first day to a more methodical and systematic approach on the final day of the exercise. Each night, cashiers meticulously balanced out their business and were properly led by their DA in closing procedures. The section must continue to improve their ability to perform to a “trained” standard by reviewing disbursing policies and regulations prior to the completion of their RIP/TOA.

(b) A few minor issues observed were: a lack of thorough knowledge of disbursing policies and SOP’s which led to several errors to note. First, confusion on whether payment of a “traveler’s” check could be made, next, uncertainty on what forms are needed for casual pay and Eagle Cash Cards (Day 1), and finally, a casual payment of \$117.00 made without regard to the standard rounding of \$5 increments for most payments. All these issues were addressed and corrected prior to the completion of the 5 day CERTEX. Overall, the disbursing section will continue to progress with continual training and a good RIP/TOA with the 149th FMD.

(3) Concerns. Attention to detail within the disbursing cell MUST be stressed throughout the RIP/TOA and as the unit assumes responsibility of their mission. Examples include: Improperly inputting Soldier information in the DDS system and making a payment (i.e. casual pay), not verifying SDP amounts in DJMS and allowing deposits to be made prior to verifying the amount, and not having proper documents on FMST mission should not occur. Although these issues were not prevalent throughout the exercise, the mistakes were made, noted, and then corrected either by the Soldiers themselves or the USAFINCOM observer controller (OC).

(4) Recommendations. Cashiers and DA's should continue reviewing theater (KFOR) specific disbursing policies and procedures. The DDO and DA should continue training on DDS and other disbursing related software thus becoming subject matter experts in their respective jobs. Attention to detail is a MUST for success in a disbursing cell. Utilizing all experienced Soldiers to train those with less experience is highly recommended. Overall, the section must utilize all resources available to improve it's readiness to serve all Soldiers within their area of responsibility.

(5) Overall Assessment: P

b. Conduct Commercial Vendor Operations (14-2-8003): P

(1) Subtasks.

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| (a) Maintain a Bills Register Card (805A-44C-1010) | P |
| (b) Verify Accounts Payable Vouchers (805A-44C-3018) | P |
| (c) Prepare Routine Vouchers for Payment (805A-APA-8205) | P |
| (d) Input Accounts Payable Vouchers into CAPS (805A-APA-8214) | P |

(2) Observations. The Soldiers within the Commercial Vendor Services performed well throughout the 4 day CERTEX. The CVS section consisted of three personnel (one Staff Sergeant and two Specialists) with the organizational structure comprised of a receiving, auditing, and certifying section. *(Note: 1 civilian is currently working in the CVS cell in Kosovo and is currently responsible for EFT payments).* Throughout the exercise, the CVS section continually improved and demonstrated a quick ability to perform to standard. Led by SSG Felix, the CVS cell collected, processed, and certified approximately 30 contracts and successfully prepared all invoices and receiving reports for payment. Both specialists, in the section demonstrated a high level of performance and will continue to progress in performance with more training and guidance. Additionally, the CVS cell was tasked to provide 1 Soldier to attend Resource Management (RM) training at the Fort McCoy RM office. SSG Felix attended the training and demonstrated an in depth aptitude to understand the correlation between the CVS cell and other cells involved in the vendor pay process.

(a) Other tasks performed to standard by the section include: printing of daily reports, inputting DOV numbers into the CAPS-C, establishing user ID's as well as user access in CAPS-C, auditing payments, and manually certifying SF 1034 vouchers for payment. Whether tasked to maintain the bills register card (BRC) or prepare/compute payment, the sections continuously executed to standard.

(b) Communication, organization, and attention to detail are three key areas that should continue to be improved in order to establish an environment conducive to success. Positive observations included: proper verification of payment vouchers, good filing and control of all documents, and excellent teamwork within the section and good organization within the section.

(3) Concerns. No major concerns to note from within the 251st CVS cell. According to 149th personnel, currently in Kosovo, the computerized accounts payable system (CAPS) is NOT interfaced with DDS. If the software is available, the systems should be updated to use the latest software. Additionally, one or two more Soldiers should be cross trained in CVS so that if needed, a Soldier can step in and undertake a role within the section.

(4) Recommendations. The CVS cell should continue to improve its communications and working relationship with the Disbursing cell. Failure to do so may lead to improper/late payments. As mentioned in the concerns, the 251st leadership should look into interfacing the DDS and CAPS systems at their location, consequently mitigating the possibility for human error. Additionally with the interface and thus the reduction of error, payments to vendors would be expedited therefore improving the overall performance of the vendor pay section.

(5) Overall Assessment: P

c. Conduct Military Pay Operations (No Task Number): P

(1) Subtasks.

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|--|---|
| (a) Determine Entitlements to Pay and Allowances (805A-FSC-8103) | P |
| (b) Interpret an Active Component Military Pay Account (805A-FSC-8105) | P |
| (c) Interpret a Reserve Component Military Pay Account (805A-FSC-8105) | P |
| (d) Research Finance Actions (805A-44C-1002) | P |
| (e) Verify Military Pay Input (805A-44C-3405) | P |

(2) Observations. The Military Pay section demonstrated its ability to conduct military pay operations to standard. The section performed well throughout the CERTEX although there is much room for improvement mainly in the areas of communication, military pay research/technical expertise, and section workflow. Communication within the section as well as with other sections in the detachment (i.e. Disbursing and CVS) must continue to improve in order to successfully complete the KFOR mission. For example, during the CERTEX Finance Mobile Support Team (FMST) Soldiers were observed directly addressing military pay questions to the Commander/Det Sergeant without first addressing the concern/question to the military pay NCOIC. This practice is not conducive to proper chain of command procedures or finance office workflow.

(a) USAFINCOM staff members spent several hours explaining Debt Management, BAH adjustments, and other key areas of Military Pay knowledge to the section leaders. Additionally, attention to detail in filling out DA FORM 2142's and all other military pay documents must

continue to improve. Soldiers failed on several occasions to ensure proper filling out of documentation which led to redundancy of work.

(b) Key areas of sustainment are teamwork, knowledge of TINS and FIDS by coders and researchers in the section, filing and organization of documents within the section, and preparation and presentation of the military pay brief (i.e. SDP). The section utilized policies, SOP's, and regulations extensively to help interpret Master Military Pay Account (MMPA) data. The Soldiers within the section also demonstrated their ability to navigate through DJMS and interpret pay inquiries without much error.

(3) Concerns. Communication and workflow must improve in order to accomplish the KFOR military pay mission. The NCO's within the section should continue to improve with more experience and time in theater. The leadership should continue emphasizing attention to detail as well as a thorough understanding of military pay policies and SOP's in order to mitigate potential errors within the section.

(4) Recommendations. Overall the section should continue to review and learn all applicable SOP's and regulations for the Kosovo theater of operations. Leadership should utilize Soldiers with extensive military pay experience to train less experienced Soldiers. Continue to groom NCO's in the section and ensure that all SOP's and policies are continually being implemented when coding documents. Open lines of communication, with key leaders from other units will help alleviate major military pay issues by ensuring Mil Per messages and changes to police are communicated and understood. .

(5) Overall Assessment: P

d. Detachment Overall Assessment: P

(1) Observations. Overall the 251st performed to standard during the CERTEX conducted on 13-16 January 2009 at Fort McCoy, WI. Upon their arrival at Fort McCoy for finance technical training on 4 January, unit leadership was challenged to formulate a plan of action for the CERTEX. Less than two weeks later, the unit demonstrated that it is more than capable to complete their mission in Kosovo. Led by CPT Sims and SFC Garner the unit planned, prepared and executed the CERTEX mission.

(a) Upon arriving at Fort McCoy for technical training, unit leadership seemed to be lacking in their knowledge and understanding of their mission. 251st leadership along with the support of USAFINCOM staff developed a sound plan of action for mission execution upon arriving in theater. This plan was supported and developed by, conducting a VTC with the 149th FMD in Kosovo, mission analysis by unit leadership, and conducting several conference calls during the finance technical training.

(b) During the CERTEX NCOIC's continually improved their sections and should continue to maintain those positive gains while seeking alternative ways of increasing productivity and performance from each of the Soldiers in their respective sections. Unit

leadership should also, continue preparing a plan for execution upon its arrival in theater. Soldiers within the unit are willing and able to perform financial management operations to standard given the proper tools and guidance from within the chain of command. The unit must continue to build their technical expertise by reviewing theater/finance policies, regulations, and SOP's.

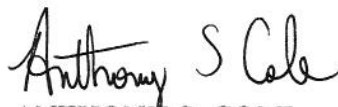
(2) Concerns. Currently Kosovo has a Defense Travel System (DTS) mission. During the CERTEX the 251st FMD was not evaluated on DTS. Because this is a KFOR10 mission, the OST Team suggests that once the 251st has arrived to Germany they speak with 266th FMC and re-evaluate the current mission. The 251st FMD will receive any additional DTS training if needed from the 266th FMC.

(3) Recommendations. **HAVE A PLAN!** Training at Hoenfels Germany prior to arriving in Kosovo should be utilized to continue training finance specific issues. Development of detailed SOP's and policies for each section must be a priority prior to and upon arrival in Kosovo. Leadership should continue to forecast and plan for future operations. NCO's (especially E-5's) must be challenged and continually groomed to make well and informed decisions. Continue communicating with COL Crespo and the 266th FMC as well as CPT Brantz and the 149th and their teams up to and throughout the RIP/TOA process. Finally, employ your best qualified and trained Soldiers in positions that will enable them to execute accordingly and succeed in the Detachment mission.

4. POC for this memorandum is 1LT Michael Hernandez at DSN 699-2800 or Michael.t.Hernandez1@us.army.mil.

3 Encls

1. Disbursing
2. CVS
3. Military Pay



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